ANTONIO:

A TRAGEDY

IN

FIVE ACTS.

BY WILLIAM GODWIN.

LONDON:

Printed by Wilks and Taylor, Chancery Lane;

FOR G. G. AND J. ROBINSON, PATERNOSTER ROW.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

I HAVE no apology to offer for this production, but that it is the first attempt of a lover of the drama. I am not insensible that it is in many views open to censure; and it is scarcely necessary I should add, that, if I had thought it wholly unworthy the reader's attention, I should have committed it, not to the press, but to the flames.

Dec. 22, 1800. W. GODWIN.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

DON PEDRO, *king of Arragon.*
DON GUSMAN, *duke of Zuniga.*
DON ANTONIO D'ALMANZA.
DON HENRY, *his brother.*
DON DIEGO DE CARDONA.
LOPEZ, *servant to Gusman.*
ALBERTO, *servant to Antonio.*

HELENA, *wife to Gusman, and sister to Antonio.*

Messenger, guards, &c.

The Scene lies at Saragossa in Spain.

Time, the Fifteenth Century.

ANTONIO.

ACT I.

SCENE, *the Manſion of Almanza.*

GUSMAN *and* HELENA.

GUSMAN.

WHY are theſe tears? What means that ſmother'd
ſigh? *(a pauſe).*
Am I no more the partner of thy heart?
Haſt thou then ceas'd to love me?

HELENA.

Ceas'd to love!
Long as this heart ſhall beat, this brain remember,
It beats, it meditates alone for Guſman.——
Thou doſt not doubt my truth!

GUSMAN.

Then why make me
A ſtranger to thy thoughts, thy cares, thy ſorrows?

HELENA.

If I am weak, and want the power
To overcome my folly,—if I am unhappy,
And can't ſubdue my waywardneſs of temper,
Why ſhould I vex thee with its weak ſuggeſtions?
Leave me to ſtrive with my infirmity:
'Tis but a tranſient cloud, and ſoon will quit me.

GUSMAN.

Thy countenance belies thy ſpeech.
Some ſerious grief ſits heavy at thy heart.
Speak, give thy paſſion vent.

HELENA.

My deareſt huſband!——

GUSMAN.

Nay, if thou wilt not ſpeak, thou canſt not love.
Oh, haſt thou bleſt me with a huſband's name,
To bar me from his pureſt privilege?

HELENA.

Guſman, I love thee: in thy love I find
All that my heart can wiſh, my thoughts deſire.
I know thy merits, and thy noble nature:
Yet, my love!——

GUSMAN.

Wherefore this pauſe? How doſt thou torture me?

HELENA.

My brother, brave Antonio! Can I think
Of him, and ſtill poſſeſs my ſoul in peace?

GUSMAN.

Antonio is a brave and valiant hero:
His name reſounds through Europe's poliſh'd ſtates,
Even from Calabria's fartheſt bound, to this
His native ſeat, the ſplendid Saragoſſa.
I well believe his private virtues will
Anſwer his martial fame. Unknown I love him.

HELENA.

Guſman, I am thy wife. Our marriage rites,
So late perform'd, had not my brother's ſanction:
Nay, he was not conſulted or inform'd
In what we had reſolv'd.——

GUSMAN.

Thou wert the monarch's ward: Don Pedro had
The right to chuſe among his nobles, which
Of them ſhould be ſo favour'd as to call
Thee his.
How can Antonio contravene the act?

HELENA.

Three years he has been abſent from his country:
Plac'd in a climate, rude with war and arms,
Danger and hardſhip are his daily bread.
When he returns, harſh and ungrateful is
The welcome he will find.

GUSMAN.

Not ſo, my Helen.
The king and he are old and conſtant friends;
Whate'er Don Pedro does,
Antonio eaſily will be induc'd
To think of favourably.

HELENA.

To Italy
My brother went, companion to Rodrigo.
He reverences Rodrigo like a parent,
He loves him with a more than filial fondneſs.
When he ſhall know I cannot be Rodrigo's,——

GUSMAN.

He'll acquieſce.
The ſage inſtructor of his earlieſt years
Is worthy of his gratitude, but ne'er
Could be a conſort proper for my Helen.

HELENA.

That his Antonio never will believe.
He was Almanza's choice. My father,

And this his deareſt, faſteſt fellow-ſoldier,
Were noble, brave and virtuous; but they both
Were ſtern in temper, fierce in reſolution,
Deeming the firſt of virtues, conſtancy
Of ſoul. Antonio has form'd him on their model:
He would regard it as the laſt diſgrace,
To yield to events, or hearken to an oracle,
Except the living law within his boſom.
For that he'd riſk all conſequences, and
For that would die.

GUSMAN.

The hour in which the marriage-rites were ended,
My friend Alvarez was diſpatch'd to Naples,
Announcing what had paſs'd. Some few weeks hence
I may expect my meſſenger's return.
Meanwhile be calm, my love.

HELENA.

Guſman, the intelligence, ſo late receiv'd,
Proclaims a battle on the eve of act.
Ere this it may be over. Then who knows
How ſoon Antonio may arrive?
Suppoſe Alvarez fails to meet my brother!

GUSMAN.

How moſt ingeniouſly the human mind
Deviſes means of torment? Should he come,
Abrupt, unwarn'd, unpacified,
What could Antonio do, a friendleſs ſtranger?

HELENA.

It may be ſo. Guſman, my ſoul
Had fix'd its earlieſt fondneſs on this brother.
To meet him, when the abſence of a day
Had interven'd, was tranſport to my heart.

Now,

Now, that three tedious years have ſunder'd us,
Muſt I regard his coming with alarm?
This roof, my father's roof, brings to my mind,
Freſh, living, viſual, all his tenderneſs,
His cheering ſmiles, his thouſand anxious cares.
To fear this much-lov'd brother, to dread his coming,
Is to my thoughts a ſtate unnatural;
It ſickens even my heart.

GUSMAN.

Helen, 'tis time thou ſhouldſt remove at once.
While here thou linger'ſt, I'm
Defrauded of the rights thy choice conferr'd.
The cuſtoms of antiquity, and, chief
Of all, the grave
And beauteous manners of our Gothic race,
Regard the open transfer of the bride,
Forth from the natal to the matron roof,
As moſt eſſential to the nuptial tie.
Forgive me, if I ſay, I can no longer
Diſpenſe
With this obſervance. Doſt revoke thy vows?

HELENA.

And canſt thou, Guſman, in an hour like this,
Urge me to ſuch a bold, apparent outrage?——
Within this manſion I firſt ſaw the light;
'Twas here my mother bore me, here
My reverend ſire drew his laſt, parting breath;
All that I ſee talks to me of my lineage,
And bears the ſacred impreſs of religion,
Of that firſt, pureſt of all human creeds,
Homage to thoſe, in whom we firſt beheld
Wiſdom,
Entire affection, ever-heedful love.
Here will I meet Antonio.

GUSMAN.

GUSMAN.

Sweet enthuſiaſt!
I yield, I yield! Helen,
I came, but now, bent on this urgent meaſure;
I ſtand diſgrac'd among the peers of Arragon
For weak neglect of a moſt reverend cuſtom:
But let them ſay their pleaſure; to my thought, diſgrace
Changes its nature, and becomes my pride,
If thou art gratified!

HELENA.

Oh, generous Guſman,
I am aſham'd to be outdone by thee
In all. Forgive, my love,
This early weakneſs, error of my nature.
Oh, give it not too harſh a name!

Enter LOPEZ.

LOPEZ.

A ſtranger aſks admiſſion to the ducheſs.

GUSMAN.

What is he?

LOPEZ.

A ſoldier he appears,—from Barcelona.

GUSMAN.

(*Having with his eye conſulted* Helena)
Admit him.

LOPEZ *introduces* ALBERTO, *and then diſappears.*

HELENA.

It is my brother's ſervant.
How is thy maſter, friend? Where haſt thou leſt him?

ALBERTO.

Madam, he is arriv'd in Arragon.

HELENA.

HELENA.

Arriv'd? and is in health? Tell me, Alberto,
How does he look?

ALBERTO.

My lord is well.

HELENA.

And where?——

ALBERTO.

Madam, he is
In Saragoſſa.

HELENA.

Here? No meſſage, no
Attendant, to announce his coming?

ALBERTO.

Urgent buſineſs, I believe, has brought him.
A trading bark convoy'd us.
Madam, we have gain'd a mighty battle;
Have you not heard the news? My valiant maſter
Perform'd the work of generals, and has ſhown
To friends and foes a miracle of practice.

HELENA.

I am moſt grateful for the intelligence.——
Yet one thing more.—I dread to aſk;
Yet I muſt know—Is Rodrigo with him?

ALBERTO.

Rodrigo is not with him.

HELENA.

Leave me, friend!

[*Exit* Alberto.

Oh, God! how ſhall I meet my brother? how
Addreſs? how anſwer him?—Come, conqueror

Of

Of Sforza, hear thy ſiſter's ſtory!
What wilt thou think? or, how wilt thou decide?——
I know too well. I ſee thy act; I hear
Thy wrath-ſwell'd voice: Are theſe the wreaths,
Thus thou exclaim'ſt, to grace my victory?
Is this the welcome of a ſoldier home,
Abſent for years,
Worn with fatigue, and ſcarr'd with glorious wounds?——
Did I not tell thee, Guſman, he'd not meet
Alvarez? 'Tis impoſſible. And now
Without the ſlighteſt hint of what I have done,
He comes to claim his ſiſter, to conduct her,
The affianc'd conſort of Rodrigo's bed.

GUSMAN.

Compoſe thyſelf, my love, ſtart not thus wildly!

HELENA.

If he had met Alvarez, that were much.
He would not then have from my lips to learn
The cruel tale.

GUSMAN.

Helen, be it my taſk
To meet Antonio, and prepare
The interview between you.

HELENA.

What, and expoſe you both
To the fierce trial of intemperate anger?——
No, no, no! I am compos'd; indeed I am!
The blow at firſt was terrible; but I
Have recollected all my thoughts,
And ſtand prepar'd. I were indeed to blame,
If I lack'd courage to defend,
That which I lack'd not courage to perform.

GUSMAN.

GUSMAN.

When Helen choſe me for the huſband of
Her love, ſhe by that act conferr'd the name
And office to protect her. Be pacified!
Imagine all even as thy heart could wiſh,
And thou ſhalt find it true. [*going.*

HELENA.

Oh, Guſman, ſtay!
Oh, be not thou my enemy! My brother
Haſtens to meet me in his father's houſe.
Wouldſt thou confront him on this ſacred ſpot?
Wouldſt meet him, thus unknown?
Canſt thou be ſo pitileſs?——
Permit me but this interview: I will
Not breathe a word to raiſe conjecture of
Our marriage. Only let me ſteal a few
Soft words, a few fraternal ſmiles, perhaps
The laſt with which he'll ever bleſs his ſiſter.

GUSMAN.

Helen, thou muſt not meet thy brother now.
In thy confuſion he with eaſe will read
The ſecret of our marriage——Secret? no!——
In all but this I am my Helen's ſlave:
But nor her merit, nor my pride, in this
Will brook concealment.

HELENA.

Guſman, I muſt have way.
A ſiſter, once ſo dearly lov'd, will know
To mitigate his wrath. I underſtand
His temper, and will ſooth it. From my tongue
Perſuaſion will proceed. All will be peace.

Enter Lopez.

LOPEZ.

Madam, your brother has this moment enter'd.

[*Exit.*

HELENA.

Leave me, my lord! I am prepar'd to meet him.

GUSMAN.

I know not how to reject thy earneſt prayer;
I would not have thee think me cruel.——
And yet, my love!—Well, I
Will give thee way.—Meet thou this brother; bid
Him welcome to his native ſoil; receive his kind
Congratulations:
But leave to me and to the king, to inform
Him of thy ſtate, and to reſtrain his anger.

HELENA.

Be it, my lord, as thou requir'ſt.

[*Exit* Guſman.

Lopez *introduces* Antonio, *and exit.*

ANTONIO.

My ſiſter, beſt lov'd girl, how art thou, Helen?
How it delights my ſoul to meet thee!

HELENA.

Oh, my brother!

ANTONIO.

Look up, my ſweet one!—
Doſt know, thy beauties are more perfect, than
When laſt I ſaw thee?
That cheek beſpeaks a heart, as yet
Unknown to ſorrow. May'ſt thou never know it!

HELENA.

Antonio! pardon my confuſion!
This is a joy, ſo ſudden, ſo unlook'd for!—

I have

I have heard of thy atchievements, heard the great
And ſplendid triumph that has crown'd thy daring.
Think how I feel thy honours and ſucceſs!

ANTONIO.

Thanks, ſweeteſt Helen! The congratulations
Of a dear ſiſter find acceptance here,
Moſt pure and unalloy'd.

HELENA.

Let me behold thee, brother!—Ah, Antonio,
Thou art not as thou wert; thy cheek is tarniſh'd;
And, ſurely, care untimely has imprinted
His ſtamp upon thy brow!

ANTONIO *(ſuppreſſing his emotion.)*

Aye, Helen! Men are born to ſtruggle.
(Burſting out.)
Helen, unmanly wrong has ſtruck
Deep in my heart. It bleeds; it burns. I pant
For juſtice and for vengeance.

HELENA.

Brother! What is't thus ſhakes thy noble nature?

ANTONIO.

Believe it, Helen,
Antonio is no coward. Had misfortune
Pointed her fierceſt arrows at *my* boſom,
Had ſhe given up *life* to calumny,
And made my *name* deteſted and accurs'd;
I could have borne all this with firmneſs:
I would have anſwer'd ſcorn with ſcorn,
And riſen the prouder from the world's contempt.

HELENA.

Antonio, ſpeak at once! Confide to me
The cauſe of this vaſt anguiſh!

ANTONIO.

But thus in my friend——

HELENA.

What can he mean?
Has he already heard of Guſman's marriage?

ANTONIO.

Well thou know'ſt, how much I lov'd,
What worthy cauſe I had to love, Rodrigo.
All that I ever knew of great or noble,
Was foſter'd in me by his generous care:
How could I e'er repay the debt I ow'd him?

HELENA.

Helen, be ſtill! he may mean ſomewhat elſe.

ANTONIO.

Injuſtice reigns, ſole empreſs, o'er the world.
This ſcene of things, that pedants call ſo fair,
Is rottenneſs and deſolation.——

HELENA.

Antonio, all thou utter'ſt is a myſtery;
Relieve my terrors.

ANTONIO.

Forgive me, Helen! Why ſhould I torment
Thy gentle boſom, with the wrongs that gnaw
And torture me? No, let me not pollute
This happy hour with words of evil import!
Do thou, my Helen, ſmile; and let us talk
Of things that, for an inſtant, may beguile
This woe-worn heart of ſorrow!

HELENA.

Relief unthought! He knows not of our marriage.

ANTONIO.

ANTONIO.

Rodrigo's griefs, though thickly ſhower'd upon him,
And venom'd with injuſtice, thy affection
With lenient hand ſhall wipe away: that prize
May cheat the memory of bittereſt wrongs.

HELENA (*aſide.*)

My affection? This is curſe on curſe!
I bleſt thy ignorance! I would thou wert
Inform'd at full!

ANTONIO.

Helen, I know
Thy generous ſpirit, know that ſuch a taſk,
Congenial to thy heart, will give thee pleaſure,
Moſt exquiſite, moſt enviable.

HELENA (*aſide.*)

Fond brother!

ANTONIO.

Thou wert our father's laſt bequeſt, to crown
The friend in all the world whom moſt he lov'd.
How ſweet the ſlighteſt tokens of remembrance,
That bring before us thoſe, whoſe generous care
Was once our deareſt portion!
This rude and modeſt dwelling, grac'd
Through rolling ſeaſons with the abode of our
Great father,
Is far more beauteous in Antonio's eyes,
Than the long galleries and vaulted roofs
Of all our Mooriſh kings. The hour, in which
To ſee thy fate united with Rodrigo's,
Is that which, even in proſpect, yields my ſoul
The pureſt pleaſure: 'twill appear as if
Almanza left his ſeat among the bleſs'd,
To grace once more the circle of his love.

HELENA.

Antonio,
I fain would ſpeak; I'd not deceive my brother—
There is a ſecret labouring in my boſom—
But thou wilt learn it—In that fatal hour,
Antonio, I ſhall know thee for my friend
Or enemy!

[*Exit.*

ANTONIO.

What does this mean?——
Sure fortune has not other griefs in ſtore,
To blaſt my entrance to my native home!——
No, no!—it is the anguiſh of Rodrigo's ſufferings,
That makes me tremble at fantaſtic ills——
Yet I muſt queſtion thee, my ſiſter, muſt
Decide at once, if ſomewhat—What, as yet
I know not—in which thou art involv'd, ſhall ſink
Me in diſtreſs, beyond
Anticipation, hopeleſs of a remedy.

[*Exit.*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT

ACT II.

SCENE, *an Apartment in the Manſion of Almanza, looking towards the Garden.*

ANTONIO *and* HENRY.

ANTONIO.

HENRY, my brother! deareſt boy,
How thou art grown? Why I ſhould ſcarce have known thee.

HENRY.

I cannot tell thee, dear Antonio, how
It joys my heart to ſee thee once again.
It ſeem'd to me a cruel fate that ſunder'd us.
Why, brother, didſt thou not admit
Me, to attend thee to the Italian wars?
I ſhould have profited beneath thy care,
And by this time had been a warrior complete.

ANTONIO.

Henry, 'tis time enough. The trade of war
Is full of hardſhips.——

HENRY.

And where is my generous friend, my mild inſtructor,
Rodrigo? Is he come too?
Could I embrace you both, and both victorious,
My heart would dance with joy.

ANTONIO.

Rodrigo is a priſoner in Milan.
Thou know'ſt perhaps,
He went to Naples to poſſeſs himſelf
Of an eſtate, bequeath'd him by
His diſtant kinſman, prince Orſini.
A wretched fellow, a retainer to
The court, diſputed his ſucceſſion:
Rodrigo, with myſelf, went to the wars,
Fought for the court, wrought prodigies of valour;
Cover'd with wounds, and in a hard-fought battle,
At length he fell: and now,
My Henry, a priſoner in the enemy's power,
The court diſclaims him; gives his inheritance
To his baſe, cringing rival; even refuſes
To take one ſtep, to gain the liberty
Of him, who thus brav'd danger in the field
For an ungrateful ſovereign.

HENRY.

Heavens! is
It poſſible ſuch monſters can exiſt?
And could they find no ſubject for their baſeneſs,
But this illuſtrious man, this generous hero?
My heart bleeds at the thought. And thou, Antonio,
What wilt thou do? Although the king of Naples
Proves thus ungrateful, I am ſure, Antonio
Ne'er will ——
Deſert his friend, as long as he has life.

ANTONIO.

True, deareſt Henry.——
The duke of Milan, who holds him priſoner,
Demands a ranſom, ſuited to his merits,

But

But ill-proportion'd to Rodrigo's wealth,
Or mine. Therefore I come
To aſk his ranſom of the king.—Pedro
I have not ſeen, ſince he has reach'd the crown;
But I will ne'er believe that greatneſs could
Debaſe his honeſt nature.

HENRY.

Doubt him not, brother. Applauſe and admiration
Have ſtill attended on his infant reign.

ANTONIO.

'Tis well. He and my ſiſter will, I truſt,
Amply compenſate the baſe wrongs of Italy.——
Juſt as I met thee, Henry, I
Was ſeeking Helena.—Tell me, dear boy,
Has aught of ill to her, aught that, when told,
Should wound my ſoul, occurr'd?

HENRY.

Oh, no, I hope not.
Wherefore that queſtion?

ANTONIO.

Soon as I arriv'd,
I flew to meet my ſiſter. In her words
There ſeem'd to lurk ſome fearful myſtery.
At firſt I mark'd it not. But, while we ſpoke
Together, ſomething ſeem'd to ſting her ſoul,
And ſhe withdrew, and left me.

HENRY.

Indeed!—
How late have letters from my ſiſter reach'd thee?

ANTONIO.

Two months ago. Wherefore that queſtion?
What might thoſe letters have declar'd?

HENRY.

Helen,
I know, diſpatch'd a meſſenger, ſo did
The king, who, ere this time, muſt have attain'd
The port of Naples.

ANTONIO.

Henry,
Thou haſt fill'd my ſoul with terror. Speak!
Speak, I conjure thee! What of Helena?

HENRY.

Indeed, I dare not.
My ſiſter only ſhould explain her conduct.—
I had my doubts—I could have wiſh'd that thou
Hadſt been conſulted—But I am no judge—
Helen was ever wiſe—the king too gave
His approbation——

ANTONIO.

Henry!—At a word;
What have they done?

HENRY.

Dear brother, do not urge me!
I have been to blame—I am ſorry I have mention'd
What is not mine, to unfold.

ANTONIO.

Henry, if e'er thou lov'dſt me, if my peace
Appear not in thy ſight as nothing worth,
Hold me no longer in this dread ſuſpence!

HENRY.

HENRY.

Remember, brother, then, that thou compell'ſt me:
Acquit me of the conſequence
Of thy enforcement.

ANTONIO.

Well—go on!

HENRY.

I have rous'd too much of expectation.
What I have to tell is nothing. Thou'lt not blame
My ſiſter.

ANTONIO.

Boy! trifler!

HENRY.

Forgive me, brother; I'll no longer vex thee.
Thou haſt not forgot the name of Guſman, duke
Of Zuniga——

ANTONIO.

Forgot him? Generous, gallant mortal!
But for his noble and intrepid daring,
What had our ſiſter been? We owe him endleſs thanks.

HENRY.

All Spain applauded his atchievement;
The king receiv'd him with loud commendation,
And took him to his friendſhip. In my ſiſter's mind
There roſe a gratitude unbounded.

ANTONIO.

What haſt thou ſaid?—
He could not, dar'd not, meditate diſhonour!—
Helen, if thou haſt ſold thyſelf to ſhame,—
Oh, curſe her, curſe her!

HENRY.

How could'ſt thou think, Antonio, that our ſiſter
Could be diſhonour'd?——She is virtue's image:
All-ſtriking calumny
Itſelf has never dar'd to wound her name.

ANTONIO.

I thank the powers that take this ſorrow from me!
Helen is ſtill my ſiſter, ſtill ſhall rank
With Spain's moſt virtuous and renowned dames.
Fool that I was to doubt it!

HENRY.

Brother, thou
Alarm'ſt me. No, Don Guſman is a man
Of niceſt honour, and the love he bore
My ſiſter——

ANTONIO.

Henry, what unfathomable tale
Lies couch'd beneath thy words?

HENRY.

To Guſman Helen
Is married.

ANTONIO.

Married!

HENRY.

Guſman aſk'd her of
The king, and ſhe is married.

ANTONIO.

Married!

HENRY.

Brother!—Good Antonio!—Nay,
Dear brother, be thyſelf!

ANTONIO.

ANTONIO.

Henry, my friend!
If in thy boſom live one ſpark of pity,
Tell me——Are they indeed then married?

HENRY.

Yes.

ANTONIO.

Then thus are clos'd the honours of Almanza!
The cord is broke. I and my kind are ſever'd.——
Well, well, well!

HENRY.

I am very ſorry. Dear Antonio, be
Of comfort!

ANTONIO.

Rodrigo, I am thine.
Thou wert my earlieſt choice, and now I am thine
Alone. Bitter, kindleſs world! But let them not
Think to eſcape me! No, by heaven!——
I'll tear the tyrant from his throne: I'll blot
His family and name from off the earth.——

HENRY.

I ſee my ſiſter;
She comes this way!—Oh, me! what have I done?—
Antonio!——Deareſt brother, do not meet her now!
Call to mind her gentleneſs,
Her nobleneſs, her worth!—I never ſhall
Forgive myſelf this fatal indiſcretion!

ANTONIO.

Do not diſtreſs thyſelf, my boy!
Be ſatisfied! I am maſter of my actions.

In

In this dread moment I'll collect my thoughts,
And act as shall become me.——
Leave me, dear Henry! I am thy friend. Thou hast
Incurr'd no blame. I rest a confidence
In thee. Thou hast a place nearest my heart.

[*Exit* Henry.

Enter HELENA.

ANTONIO.

Helena! I have heard that thou art married.

HELENA.

Oh brother! lov'd Antonio!——

ANTONIO.

Talk not to me! Thou art my bane and sorrow.
My cup of misery thou hast crown'd
Even to the brim.—I had a sister,
My pride, my glory, source of all my joy!

HELENA.

Heavenly powers!
Is this the language I am doom'd to hear?
This from my brother?

ANTONIO.

Thou wert the dearest thing I knew on earth.
Rodrigo held the second place.
He held it, for his fate was twin'd with thine;
And, whensoe'er I saw that gallant mortal,
I said, There moves my Helen's destin'd husband!

HELENA.

Antonio, on my knees——!

ANTONIO.

ANTONIO.

(*Preventing her*).

Helen, forbear!—Helen, I muſt
Speak out the words, that thou art bound to hear.——
Haſt thou forgot the deep and awful vow,
A vow, that angels heard, and God recorded,
By which thou wert engag'd Rodrigo's wife?

HELENA.

I do remember.

ANTONIO.

Doſt thou recal to mind the ſolemn hour,
When our great father yielded his laſt breath?
His children ſtood aſſembled round his couch,
On thee he call'd
With faltering accents and imperfect ſpeech,
Then took thy hand, and plac'd it in Rodrigo's;
He bleſs'd you both, he dictated the oath
In which thou ſtand'ſt, while, kneeling,
With eyes upliſt to heaven, and tear-ſtain'd cheeks,
Thou gav'ſt thy pledge: Almanza heard thee, bow'd
His head, and died.—Helen, anſwer me quick!
Haſt thou forgot the death-bed of my father?

HELENA.

Have I forgot?—Imperiſhable image!—

ANTONIO.

This was a marriage; thou wert Rodrigo's wife.
Where ever was a contract, ſeal'd with ſuch
Solemnity, in every circumſtance
So venerable, ſo binding?——Adultreſs!——

HELENA.

HELENA.

My brother! There are perſons,
Who, if they had beſpoke me thus inſultingly,
I would diſdain to anſwer. There are too,
Whom I regard with diſtant worſhip,
To whom I'd juſtify my conduct.
With thee I can do neither.——
What have I left thee then? The words of love!

ANTONIO.

Preſumptuous girl!
Not a ſtep nearer!—No, not for thy life!—
Atone thy guilt!

HELENA.

My deareſt brother, brother of my mind,
My daily meditation, and my dream
Each night! how I have long'd to ſee thee!
How long'd to recollect with thee
Our early childhood,
To walk in the ſame groves, to ſit beneath
The ſelf-ſame ſhade, to point again to thee
The objects of remark that, in the days
Of prattling infancy, thou pointedſt out
To me! I have follow'd thee in all thy wanderings,
Have counted o'er thy dangers; I have paſs'd
A thouſand times beneath the very gate
Where laſt we parted, hearing
In ev'ry breeze the ſound of thy farewel,
Seeing in my rapt ſoul the laſt adieu
Thy hand expreſs'd, the floating of thy robe.——

ANTONIO.

This is too much!
Yes, I have lov'd thee: I'd have given my hand,
My eyes, my life, to buy thy happineſs.

HELENA.

Call back old times, Antonio; be the thing
Thou wert.

ANTONIO.

No, Helen, never. Wherefore did I love thee?
For the ingenuous ſpirit I deem'd I found
In thee, for the unblemiſh'd ſtock, from which
I held thee ſprung. If not,
I might as well have taken to my friendſhip
Some hilding from the ſuburbs,
Some wretch obdur'd and naturaliz'd in vice,
Some creature, overgrown
With blots, and foul deformities; or worſe,
Defil'd with baſe uncleanneſſes of ſoul.

HELENA.

I feel my rectitude;
My vindication I could utter. But
I know thy ſtubborn conſtancy,
And hope not to convince thee. I had rather
Have thy forgiveneſs, than b' acquitted by thee.
Forgiveneſs ſprings from brotherhood, from blood,
From tenderneſs of heart. Weep o'er thy Helen;
Reproach me, with a broken accent, with
A gliſtening eye; but bleſs me! Take me to
Thy arms; bid me be happy; ſay, thou wilt
Confirm and guard thy ſiſter's happineſs!

ANTONIO.

Honour!——
What is the world to me, if robb'd of honour?
No kindred, no affection can ſurvive.
'Tis the pure ſoul
Of love, the parent of entire devotion,
Without it man is heartleſs, brutiſh, and
A clod. This was my infant creed; in this
I'll die.

HELENA.

Antonio,
This is the very criſis of my ſtory.
My fate is in thy hands.
Dear brother, idol of my ſoul! Will nothing move thee?
Haſt thou the heart to caſt me off for ever?

ANTONIO.

Caſt off thy paramour, thy Guſman!

HELENA.

Oh, that the world ſhould change men into tyrants!
With ſpecious names of honour and propriety,
Making each man the monarch of his fellow,
Hard-hearted, rigid, and inexorable!
Nothing was e'er more kind than thou haſt been:——
But that is over now!
The undeſigning blandneſs of thy youth
Is rooted from thy breaſt: no more indulgence;
No more of thoſe angelic, artleſs ſmiles,
That ſpring from others' pleaſure, nor require
A reaſon to be happy and be good!

ANTONIO.

Talk'ſt thou of vindication?
Dar'ſt thou aſſume the tone of innocence?

This

This is
A guilt more dire than even thy foul offence.

[HELENA, *who is no longer capable of ſpeech, ſtretches her arms towards him with a geſture of ſupplication.*]

No, Helen, no! Our kindneſs is diſſolv'd.
From a degenerate ſiſter I withdraw:
In this my native city, which I've not
Beheld, ſince great Almanza's obſequies,
Henceforth I'll league me with who once adorn'd it,
And kindled firſt within me the pure ſentiments
Of ſacred virtue.——Farewel,
Thou, once my ſiſter! now for ever ſever'd!——
No more thy brother, view in me thy judge!

[*Exit.*

HELENA.

Antonio! oh, my brother! hear! yet hear me!
He is gone!—I have loſt my brother!——loſt!——
We now ſhall dwell within the walls
Of one ſame city, and not ſee each other:
My ſlumbers will no more be bleſt with his Good-night!
Nor, in the morning, ſhall the thought of his
Kind ſalutation urge me from my chamber.——
He will avoid the houſe in which he hears
I may be found; he'll paſs along a different ſtreet,
Leſt he ſhould meet me; all Antonio's friends
Will be inſtructed not to name my name,
Leſt he ſhould ſhudder at the loathſome ſound——
This is too much!
'Tis paſt; 'tis gone.——I have nor ſire, nor brother!—
Oh!—— [*ſinks on a couch.*

Enter GUSMAN.

GUSMAN.

My Helena in tears!——
This is Antonio!——How great is my misfortune,
Conſtrain'd to leave thee thus to his encounter!

HELENA (*looking up.*)

My Zuniga!—My all! my love! my huſband!

GUSMAN.

Quiet thy ruffled ſpirits; reſt thy head
Upon my boſom! Is there any ill
That can o'erwhelm thee there?

HELENA.

Guſman,
I have been aſſail'd in terms of ſuch reproach——
What ſhall I ſay? How reconcile myſelf
To my own thoughts, or how believe me worthy
Thy generous love?—He names me an adultreſs!——
He tells me that I was Rodrigo's wife!

GUSMAN.

Abſurd and impious thought! vain ſuperſtition!
Thy king, thy country, and her ſacred law
Pronounc'd thee free. Who ſhall diſpute the award?
Thou art unſpotted as the virgin ſnow,
And pure as heaven's own beam.

HELENA.

Indeed no evil harbour'd in my heart.——
How cheering are thy words! Leave me no more,
My huſband!

GUSMAN.

GUSMAN.

Helen, I'd not afflict thy gentle ſpirit.
But thou already know'ſt, Antonio has
Declar'd himſelf our enemy.——

HELENA.

Alas!
It is too true.

GUSMAN.

He will not ſtop at mere
Deſertion. His proud, untam'd courage aims
To annul the union that his voice condemns.
He meditates ſome deſperate violence.

HELENA.

Heavens, what can he meditate? Guſman,
Thou haſt fill'd up my meaſure of alarm.
Is it not then enough
To be the object of Antonio's hate?
Horror on horror!——
Should he purſue thee with ſome deſperate purpoſe,
Should thou and he with hoſtile arms oppos'd——

GUSMAN.

Thou miſtak'ſt
The meaning of my words! 'Tis not the vulgar trial
Of ſword to ſword thy brother meditates.
His plans are dark, and therefore more demand
Our caution. But firſt, my Helena,
'Tis urgent on us, we no more delay
Thy reſidence beneath thy huſband's roof.

HELENA.

Guſman, do with me as thou wilt!—This only——
Think, my lord, how terrible a blow

Has

Has ſtruck me here; how I have lov'd Antonio!——
Oh, no: believe not, with reproachful meaning
I mention this. Indeed I am at eaſe.
Indeed thou art my all, my life, my world.——
But, now I have nothing left but thee,
Let me not loſe the only jewel that
Remains, to cheer my heart, and make exiſtence
Wear to my thoughts the tender hue of hope!

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT

ACT III.

SCENE, *the Court.*

Enter on one ſide DON PEDRO *and Guards, on the other* ANTONIO; ANTONIO *kneels; the King raiſes him, and then makes a Signal for the Guards to withdraw; they embrace.*

PEDRO.

ANTONIO, my brother!
Do I then hold thee in my arms, the ſame
Dear partner of my thoughts, that cheer'd my morn
Of life?

ANTONIO.

My gracious king,——

PEDRO.

No, no, my eldeſt friend,
I am no monarch in an hour like this!——
But, generous friend, I hear that victory
Has crown'd thy ſteps. Tell me the gallant ſtory.
It was a glorious field, and Sancho's throne
Now by thy gallant deed is fix'd too firm
For all the ſtrength of Italy to ſhake.

ANTONIO.

Pedro, to me 'tis little pleaſing
To boaſt my proweſs.——Turn we, my friend,
To other points. Wilt thou allow me to

Assume the office of a monitor?
I have been little us'd
To recognize in thee my future sovereign:
Will that now plead in pardon of my plainness?

PEDRO.

Antonio,
I may remember that I am thy king;
That thou art my friend, can never be forgot.

ANTONIO.

My heart is full. 'Twas to relieve its burthen
I sought this conference. I've a thing to speak,
Of greater worth than worlds.——

PEDRO.

Name the blest occasion,
May give me power to aid thee!

ANTONIO.

Pedro, descended from a race of heroes!
Oh, Christian warrior! mighty Spanish chieftain!—
It is not for myself that I would ask:
Honour and truth, my father and my race,
In this are all involv'd!—Yet, Pedro, first
And chiefest, I come, urg'd by my loyalty,
Thy name,
My country's greatness, speaking by my lips!

PEDRO.

Antonio, I am firm. What thou hast said,
Has stirr'd up strange conjectures and sad expectation!

ANTONIO.

Hear me then, Pedro; and to prove thy firmness,
In silence hear me state the charge at full.

PEDRO.

PEDRO.

I will.

ANTONIO.

With me there went to Naples,
To Sancho's court, thy friend and mine,
Rodrigo. He is now a priſoner in Milan,
Abandon'd by the prince, whoſe wars he led,
Whoſe ſceptre he redeem'd.

PEDRO.

Involve not me in Sancho's guilt! I will
Demand my friend, will pay his ranſom, and
Reſtore him to his country.

ANTONIO.

Is this the ſilence thou aſſur'dſt?——
I have had letters from Rodrigo; nay, more,
Have viſited the houſe of his confinement.
Each night, amidſt his ſlumbers, he is cheer'd,
In double gloom of darkneſs and his dungeon,
By the bright viſitations of ——
Almanza's daughter. When I took my laſt
Sad leave, he preſs'd my hand in parting, and
Exclaim'd, My fortune I have loſt, my place
In arms is taken from me,
Antonio, be it thine to guard
My living wealth, ſecure my ſacred claim
To Helen's wedded love!

PEDRO.

Haſt thou not heard, my friend, thy ſiſter is married?

ANTONIO.

Yes, Pedro, I have heard the accurſed tale.
If an enemy had told me this,—ſhould
I not have ſmote the liar on the cheek?
If, on the drear and naked Appenine,
A gaunt
And ſwarthy ſybil had predicted it,
Should I not have mock'd her boaſted foreſight?
I ſhould have ſaid, I know my Pedro, and
I can as confidently truſt his juſtice,
As the pure juſtice of all-ſeeing Heaven!——
My confidence would have been raſh and groundleſs.

PEDRO.

Antonio, ſpeak! what wouldſt thou I ſhould do?

ANTONIO.

Lend me the ſanction of my ſovereign's name,
To tear aſunder Helen and her raviſher!

PEDRO.

Great God! and is it poſſible thou ſhouldſt
Require an act like this?——

ANTONIO.

The preſſure of Rodrigo's hand in our
Laſt parting I ſtill feel; his words ſtill ſound
Within my ears——Shall I go back to Milan,
Seek him within his dungeon, and beſpeak
Him thus? Thy fortune thou haſt loſt, thy place
In arms is taken from thee; I am come
To announce thy laſt of loſſes, her to whom
Thou wert betroth'd. Naples has play'd thee foul;
Her king has ſtoop'd to ignominious fraud:
Add to the catalogue of thy deceivers

The

The king of Arragon.
Helen is given to another;
Think thyſelf happy that a priſon
Excludes thee from the witneſs of theſe wrongs;
Let thy great heart burſt with the diſappointment;
Die, and have reſt!—Pedro,
Shall this be ſaid to him, thy guardian angel,
The former of thy ſpirit, the father of thy mind?

PEDRO.

Antonio,
No reverence, homage, token of my gratitude,
Shall from Rodrigo ever be withheld.
But let us not tread under foot the pureſt joys
That earth can boaſt, where from the violation
Rodrigo reaps nor pleaſure nor advantage.
If I
Had never witneſs'd the commingling minds
Of Guſman and of Helena,
I might, like thee, have doubted and oppos'd.
All that has gain'd the ſpecious name of good,
Sinks into ſhadow, when but once compar'd
With ſuch a ſacred, mutual, living love!

ANTONIO.

Pedro, I ſtand aſtoniſh'd at thy words.
Think what thou art!——
My ſiſter was Rodrigo's wife!——What makes
A marriage?
Conſent of parents? It was there!
The ſolemn yielding of the bride
To the concerted contract?

The heaven-invoking pledge our faith prescribes?
All, all were there!——

PEDRO.

Be not thus impetuous!
Oh, urge me not too far!

ANTONIO.

Pedro, I know thee well, and know thy heart,
Thou hast been much deluded, but I know thee,
Think that in me thou once again behold'st
Almanza living! Wilt thou resist him?
Descendant of our Gothic princes, prince,
Who stand'st here on the very region, where
The godlike Scipio stamp'd to latest time
The record of his continence and sanctity,
Thou wilt, thou must,
Show thyself worthy of what on this spot
Of earth has been perform'd and reperform'd.
The glorious inspiration
Reaches even now thy heart.
I see thee stand astonish'd at thy wrong.
I hail the auspicious omen. Come,
Oh, more than king! oh, honest of friends!
Lose not a moment!

Enter LOPEZ.

LOPEZ.

My liege——

PEDRO.

Why this intrusion?
Begone! I have no leisure for thy message,

LOPEZ,

LOPEZ.

(*uncertain and retiring.*)

Sire,

Don Guſman——

ANTONIO.

What of Guſman?

PEDRO.

Lopez, return. Unfortunate encounter!

LOPEZ.

Gracious ſir,
My orders were to bear with utmoſt ſpeed
The intelligence, that Helen is in ſafety
Beneath my maſter's roof.

PEDRO.

Enough; retire.

Exit LOPEZ: *the King and* ANTONIO *look at each other, the one ſpeechleſs with confuſion, the other with aſtoniſhment.*

I feel that thou muſt think me
Falſe, hollow, hypocritical—Antonio!——

(*A pauſe; the King ſeems ſtruggling for utterance.*)

I cannot ſpeak to thee.—Wait yet a little!
I'll ſoon return.—Wait, I intreat thee!

[*Exit.*

ANTONIO.

Stay, Pedro, ſtay!—He is gone! I'll follow him!—
Oh, no; let me not mar my awful taſk
With inauſpicious, undigeſted haſte!—

Did

Did I hear aright?
My ſiſter ſtolen, privily remov'd
From the dear ſanctuary of her parent roof,
While I am held in parley by the king!——
'Tis plain he did expect this meſſenger!——
How did he ſtand confounded at his entrance?
How ſhrank! how fled?——
And this is then the end of my remonſtrance?——
I fondly thought, 'tween me and other men
There were accordant and reſponſive ſympathies.
I ſpeak, but 'tis to wild, unhearing winds;
I utter forth my ſoul in honour's cauſe,
Yet find but lifeleſs, unconceiving marble.
What then am I? That which to me ſeems holy,
Is it to them a jeſt, and nothing worth?
Is all that I have learn'd, a fiction; all
I have liv'd, a dream?—I wake, and am alone.——
Soft, who comes here? This ſure muſt be the raviſher!
I ſee the inſolence of flown proſperity.

Enter GUSMAN.

GUSMAN.

Does Don Antonio know me?

ANTONIO.

Perhaps I do,
I take thee for that minion, who diſplays
As fame, and writes among his proud atchievements,
Matrons ſeduc'd, and families diſhonour'd.

GUSMAN.

Would thou couldſt read my heart! Thou'dſt ſee my honeſty,
And meet my warm embrace.

ANTONIO.

Let me ſurvey thee! Did I ever think
This thing a hero? Was I the fool to dream,
That he could ſwell my liſt of noble friends?——
[*Going.*

GUSMAN.

Stay yet a moment!
The king has ſeen thee, and his friendly thoughts
Thy blind, impetuous zeal has put to route.
But I am both a pleader and a party,
And in my cauſe I feel a confidence,
Not to be baffled.

ANTONIO.

Who is this Guſman, this generous monitor?
Firſt, by ſtratagem,
And low contrivance, he removes my ſiſter;
Leſt, having power, I might perhaps diſgrace
Myſelf by an unworthy uſe,—this done,
He hither comes, to calm my paſſions, and
To teach me reaſon.

GUSMAN.

What wouldſt thou do?
The ſtate to which thy ſiſter has engag'd
Her faith, is that which Heaven deſign'd her:
She is the conſort of a Spaniſh knight,
A chief of birth and honourable name,
And, which is moſt, the huſband of her love.——

ANTONIO.

Sagacious moraliſt! ſmooth, decent profligate!

GUSMAN.

GUSMAN.

Thou haſt deliver'd Naples from the invader!
Peace to the huſbandman thou haſt ſecur'd,
Honour and conſcious freedom to her nobles.——

ANTONIO.

Fair-weather, gilded courtier! quit this topic,
And talk of ſomething thou canſt underſtand!

GUSMAN.

Canſt thou recal that day of manly triumph,
And wilt thou now obſcure theſe well-earn'd laurels
By rage and vengeance to a helpleſs woman?——
Conſider! let me lead thee to thy ſiſter!
Embrace her as her ſire! revive her, like
A God!

ANTONIO.

Were great Rodrigo number'd with the dead,
Were every peer of Chriſtendom extinguiſh'd,
No hope, no recompence, no dire neceſſity
Should ever win me to approve this union.
Thou haſt debauch'd a maid, who, till
Thou found'ſt her, was the glory of her race;
Blaſted a lineage of untainted honour;
Yea, chang'd a king, the leader of our hoſts,
Heir to the ſtrain of Raymond and Alfonſo,
To the convenient friend of rape and vileneſs.
Thou wert enough to rouſe the mighty dead.

GUSMAN.

Antonio, I endure thy taunts no longer.
Thy ſiſter is my wife; I am her proper guardian,
And will not brook thy interference.
I warn thee, therefore, come not near her; eſſay

Not to accoſt her with rough, furious language;
Reſpect her matron ſtate, reſpect her huſband!

[*Exit.*

ANTONIO.

Begone!
I have no ear for idle threats and brawls.——

Enter HENRY.

Oh, Henry! doſt thou know thy brother?

HENRY.

Know thee?

ANTONIO.

I was a Spaniard;
Heaven ſhone upon my birth,
And made me native to the proudeſt realm;
It gave Almanza for my father,
And Pedro for the brother of my life's firſt dawn.——
'Tis gone! 'tis finiſh'd!

HENRY.

I knew not, brother, that thou wert acquainted
With Pedro's laſt reſolve, and therefore came,
To pour into thy ear the unpleaſing tidings.
I ſee thou need'ſt it not.

ANTONIO.

What tidings? what intelligence?

HENRY.

The king no ſooner learn'd, that Helena
Was ſafely lodg'd beneath her huſband's roof,
Than thither he repair'd. Guſman,
Having caught ſome broken hints of what had paſs'd

'Tween thee and Pedro, left the ſpot abruptly:
The king and Helena remain'd together.
What then was her ſurpriſe,
When Pedro ſpoke himſelf reſolv'd to ſeparate
Her and her lord! He had
Left thee, he ſaid, inflam'd with indignation
At his imputed treachery, nor had
Repell'd the loathſome charge, determin'd,
In deeds, not words, to ſeek his vindication.

ANTONIO.

Is it poſſible I was ſo near ſucceſs?——
But
I underſtand thee not. Thou ſaidſt but now,
Thou wert the bearer of unpleaſing tidings!

HENRY.

What follow'd next I know not; but thus much
Is by his lateſt orders vouch'd and certain:
Pedro has reconfirm'd their union, and
Engag'd by every ſacred vow to aſſert
Their cauſe 'gainſt all oppoſers.

ANTONIO.

Oh, yes, I knew it well. My boding mind
Aſſur'd me what muſt follow.——
They thus inſult me, daſtards! as ſecure,
Defended by their million ſtrength.

HENRY.

'Tis baſe and coward-like. They may defeat,
But ſuch defeat can ne'er diſgrace their victim.

ANTONIO.

Victim! Didſt thou ſay, victim? Recal the word!
In bidding me deſpair, they know not what

They

They do. Struck from the roll of living men,
The abſent and the dead fill all my thoughts:
With me they wander forth, with me they ſit;
I ſee their faces, and I entertain
Their ſpirits in this deſolate boſom.
I am not ſad, they comfort me: Struck through with all their ſhafts, I will
Not weep. No, Henry, no!——Henry,
I am on the threſhold of an enterpriſe,
Which filial duty, friendſhip and religion
Imperiouſly preſcribe.
If I ſhould fall, I fall a martyr,
And in
A cauſe moſt glorious.—Leave me to the commerce
Of my own thoughts. Farewel,
Thou lovely ſcion of a ſpotleſs ſtock!

HENRY.

Antonio, at this hour I would moſt anxiouſly
Avoid to thwart thy temper, or oppoſe
Thy will;
But that one doubt is interpos'd,
And in one point I deem that I may ſerve thee——
Is it thy aim to ſeize my ſiſter's perſon?

ANTONIO.

Thou judgeſt truly. On that I have reſolv'd.

HENRY.

I am moſt perfectly acquainted with
The palace of the duke.
One room my ſiſter, who could rarely be
Induc'd to go, yielded to call her own.
It opens to the garden: thither, by

My long accuſtom'd acceſs to the ſpot,
Doubt not, I could conduct thee unobſerv'd.

ANTONIO.

'Tis well. I yield myſelf to thy direction.——
I had a plan——But thy ſuggeſtion
Is ſoothing to my mind. 'Twill give
Me double joy to owe to thee ſucceſs.

HENRY.

Thou fill'ſt my ſoul with exultation, brother,
To join with thee in aught thou undertak'ſt,
A humble follower, or convenient guide,
A priſoner, a ſimple armour-bearer,
Would all and each be grateful to my heart.

ANTONIO.

Come then, my friend! Helen, thy fate is near!——
The progreſs of licentious ſhameleſſneſs
Shall be arreſted; the fair forms
Of chaſtity and matron-faith ſhall once
Again reſume their ſovereignty, and nations
Do homage, hail their graces and adore.

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT

ACT IV.

SCENE, *the Manſion of Almanza.*

HENRY *and* ALBERTO.

HENRY.

OH, my poor ſiſter! Alberto, where's thy miſtreſs?

ALBERTO.

Beneath this very roof.

HENRY.

Beneath this roof? Impoſſible!
Why, here they firſt will ſeek her!

ALBERTO.

Yet this place
My maſter judges adequate,
Lin'd with the ſlender band he late collected,
To overbear ſurpriſe. Some previous points
Adjuſted, he will then remove his ſiſter.
There is, it ſeems, beneath this very manſion,
A cave dug under-ground, the labour of
Some diſtant age, perhaps for purpoſes of flight,
Perhaps the receptacle of hidden treaſure.
Obſcur'd by time, the ſecret of this outlet
Continued in Antonio's breaſt alone. Through
This paſſage Helena will ſhortly be
Convey'd.

HENRY.

HENRY.

Ill-fated ſiſter!
Yes, yes, thy ruin is but too ſecure.——
How bears ſhe this reverſe of fortune?

ALBERTO.

Even as a matron torn from all ſhe loves.
In the rude theatre of war from which I come,
I have ſeen the waſte of towns, and overthrow
Of the poor peaſant's hovel. I've ſeen the mother,
Inſulted and abus'd, ſit on the ground
Amidſt her murder'd babes, her eyes
Faſten'd on vacancy, expreſſive of
The laſt deſpair. Truſt me, young maſter,
The look of my dear miſtreſs brought again
That diſmal ſcene before me.

HENRY.

Prithee, good Alberto, leave me!

[*Exit* Alberto.

Oh, my Antonio! I begin to feel
A mighty difference
Between the talking of a ſtubborn feat,
And the performance.——
I ſaw her in the moment of her capture,
Myſelf unſeen. I heard her ſhriek of anguiſh,
Heard how
With loud and frantic cries ſhe call'd on Guſman.——
Why with unhallow'd eagerneſs did I
Intrude into this enterpriſe?——

Enter

Enter ANTONIO.

ANTONIO.

Henry, I thank thee. Now I feel, thou art
Indeed my brother.

[HENRY *bows in return to his brother's acknowledgments, but without being able to ſpeak.*]

While Helen is convey'd from Saragoſſa,
'Tis my unfailing duty to remain,
To meet all queſtions and diſpute their fury.
Be thou my ſiſter's convoy. Manuel and Sanchez
At full have been inſtructed in the buſineſs:
But I'll not leave thee out in aught I do.
A moment's conference in our natal manſion
I hold with Helen. Then thou ſhalt have notice.

[*Exeunt.*

Another apartment in the houſe of ALMANZA.

SCENE, *as in Act II.*

HELENA *is diſcovered in an attitude of dejection: to her enter* ANTONIO.

ANTONIO.

Degenerate Helena! no more my ſiſter,
Fallen from thy rank, thy honours and thy birth:
Haſt thou, with ſad and ſerious thoughts, reflected
On thy offence?

HELENA.

I have no anſwer to return thee. I find
Myſelf thy priſoner.

ANTONIO.

ANTONIO.

Me thou haſt given to everlaſting ruin.
But that is the leaſt.——I have no more a country——

HELENA.

Doſt thou dare to talk of injury?
Doſt thou aſſume the language of a ſufferer?
Theſe are the well-known arts of uſurpation.——

ANTONIO.

Hear me, Helen!——
If war has had an intereſt in my ſoul,
When I have read my country's martial ſtory,
The acts incredible of her great Cid
And of his puiſſant peers,——
If I have long'd with thirſt inſatiable
To inſcribe my name in fame's high capitol,
I now ſuſpend theſe choſen, cheriſh'd viſions:
When all other men refuſe
The claims of juſtice, that the heavier preſſes
The weight on me. Speak therefore; tell me of
Thy ſtate of mind!

HELENA.

My future deſtination,
Does it in aught depend upon my anſwer?

ANTONIO.

No. A monaſtery is thy doom.
Thou never more ſhalt ſee, or ſpeak with Guſman.

HELENA.

Not ſpeak with him? not ſee him?

ANTONIO.

The remnant of thy days muſt be conſum'd

In ſtill ſeclusion.
Thou haſt no longer lot nor portion
In the wide circle of ſociety.
Within the limits of a cloiſter
Hid in the narrow compaſs of a cell,
Forgetting and forgot by all whom yet
Thou haſt beheld and lov'd, thou muſt exiſt.

HELENA.

Oh, brother! mercy, mercy, brother!——
This is too much. This is baſe cruelty.
Deliberate, ſavage, meditating cruelty.

ANTONIO.

Helen, awake! compoſe, command thyſelf!

HELENA.

See at thy feet I fall, crawl on the earth,
And aſk for pity! Wilt thou not liſten?
Were a poor wretch, that's periſhing for want,
Burnt up with thirſt, his parch'd and fever'd tongue
Scalded with drowth, to aſk one drop of water,
One ſmalleſt crumb of ſuſtenance, couldſt thou
Deny him?——Even ſuch a wretch am I!

ANTONIO.

Helen, I am reſolv'd. How canſt thou think
To turn me?

HELENA.

Thou man of iron!
Thou 'rt not the ſon of him I call'd my father:
Thou, thou art ſprung from Pyrenean ſavages,
Born in thoſe horrid ſcenes that nature left
Rude from the hand of chaos, cradled with

Wild winds, and hush'd to thy first slumbers by
The roaring ocean. Hence! I'll not endure thy sight.

ANTONIO.

Why dost thou rave? This wild ungovern'd fury
Can heal no sorrow. I feel thy misery——

HELENA.

What canst thou feel? what canst thou understand?

ANTONIO.

Give o'er this violence! Consider well——

HELENA.

Set me at liberty! I will not be
Control'd. Set me at liberty!
Why dost thou mock me with thy reasonings? Am
I not thy prisoner? Think not, thou
Canst cheat my soul! I'll not attend to reason,
Till I am free to do what reason bids.

ANTONIO.

Fain would I yet behold in thee
My sister, great Almanza's daughter. Think,
Even in this fearful doom, what difference there
Will be
Between a heart rebellious, and chastis'd!
If, having sinn'd thus deeply, thou persist
To love thy guilt, and hate the hand of justice,
It will indeed be heavy with thee:
Like a foul renegade, o'ertaken and
Condemn'd, thou'lt tear thy hair, and gnaw thy chains,
And waste a weary life in execrations.
But penitence and virtuous thoughts will dress
Thy face with smiles, thy cell with chearfulness——

HELENA.

HELENA.

Thou driv'ſt me deſperate. Think not in deſpair
Thou'lt find a helper.
My fleſh creeps at thee; and I'll woo my death,
Sweet, peace-diſpenſing, amiable death!
To eſcape thy power. Oh, for a ſword, for ſome
Life-quelling poiſon! Guſman, lover, huſband!

ANTONIO.

No, Helen, this is not the image of
Deſpair. Thou know'ſt him not.
Deſpair is ſtill, with fix'd, unmoving eye,
With limbs relax'd, and half-benumb'd in death:
Stupid ſhe ſeems, vacant of apprehenſion;

(*During this ſpeech* HELENA *ſinks into a ſeat.*)

Yet with a ſecret, hopeleſs longing to
Be taught the way to peace.——And ſuch thou art!——
Oh, let me then remind thee, nor be thou
Deaf to the ſound, of what thou oweſt thy father,
What to ſociety, to virtue, and
Thy God!

HELENA.

Thou fool,
How dar'ſt thou thus addreſs thyſelf to me?
Thou ſoldier, ſophiſt, diſſertating pedant!
Who think'ſt to chain the ſallies of the heart;
And ſeek'ſt to change the warm realities
Of this fair globe, into a ſcenic ſhow
Of empty motions, figures without ſouls.
How I deſpiſe thee! How I laugh to ſcorn
Thy lordly wiſdom!

ANTONIO.

Helen! let me not ſee thee thus!
Aſſiſt! lend me thy aid to conquer thee!

HELENA.

Avaunt, and quit the place! my ſoul repels thee!
I am a wife, a ſacred title,
Fraught with all myſteries that adorn our nature.
I aſk not how it came: it is enough
That I am Guſman's: the ſtate, the church,
Gave ſacredneſs and benediction to our choice.
Love, ſympathy, endearments mutual,
Community of thoughts, of wiſh, of ſentiments,
Have drawn each day the hand cloſer, and yet
More cloſe.—Didſt ever hear theſe themes?
No, in good ſooth: for thou, thou art a ſoldier;
'Gainſt human feelings thy proud heart is ſteel'd;
Thy hands are red with gore; and to thy darling fame
Thou ruſheſt on 'midſt flaming cottages,
The ſhrieks of widows, and poor infant blood.

ANTONIO.

Here, Manuel, Sanchez!

[*They enter.*

You have receiv'd your orders:
Convey her hence! this inſtant!
No heſitation! no delay!—Begone!

[*Exeunt: manet* Antonio.

So, my Rodrigo, this one ſtep decides:
'Tis done!——
Can I be wrong?—Did I not ſeek this conference
That I might pour in Helen's ear conviction?——
Have I done that? Have I not ſtood before her,

Abaſh'd,

Abaſh'd, confounded, ſpeechleſs,
While ſhe, the culprit, lorded o'er my ſoul?
Her word—was wife—and ſoldier!—
No, no—What I have done was juſt, and could
Not be forborn.——

Enter ALBERTO.

ALBERTO.

The duke of Zuniga demands to ſee you.

ANTONIO.

Let him approach!—I am bound to hear and anſwer him. [*Exit* Alberto.

Enter GUSMAN.

GUSMAN.

Have I then found thee, ruffian? Where is Helena?
Where is my wife?

ANTONIO.

A gentler tone than this, ſir, might bid fairer,
If thou deſir'ſt an anſwer.

GUSMAN.

Gentler?
What conduct, ſir, is this that thou haſt held?
This ſculking like a thief,
Treading with doubtful and felonious ſteps
Midſt darkneſs and obſcurity? If I
Had done thee wrong, why didſt thou not provoke
Me to the liſted field? Why prefer,
Yes, I muſt ſay, thus baſely, to direct
Thy ſtrength againſt a woman?

ANTONIO.

ANTONIO.

Even as thou wilt. Hold thy heroic course!
It is not my affair to queſtion it.

GUSMAN.

Robber! free-booter! raviſher! Will this
That thou haſt done, be borne 'mongſt civiliz'd
And poliſh'd men?

ANTONIO.

I thank thee from my ſoul.
My ſiſter's tears, her firm and generous carriage,
Had ſhaken me to the centre. But thy onſet
New ſtrings my ſpirit, ſtirs my ſleeping courage.

GUSMAN.

Is it then poſſible thy purpoſes
Even now were ſhaken by my Helen's voice?
Antonio, thou eſteem'ſt me proud: I will
Submit to intreat thy love, to court thy favour.
'Tis thine, by one poor word, aye, with a wiſh,
To give unutterable happineſs.

ANTONIO.

And doſt thou fall thy creſt, and change thy language?

GUSMAN (*fiercely.*)

Antonio, thou muſt ne'er believe—
It is impoſſible—that I
Can yield one atom in ſo dear a queſtion.
(*reſtrained.*)
Yet I forbear—yet I will call thee brother!
Burſt not at once the barrier that reſtrains me.

ANTONIO.

I am truly ſorry that I muſt diſclaim
The near affinity which thus thou tender'ſt.

Thy

Thy meek forbearance might deſerve
Another's thanks; but I have never lov'd
To incur an obligation, leaſt of all,
To him,
To whom I do not feel I could return it.
Therefore I thank thee not——

GUSMAN.

(*with increaſing fierceneſs.*)

My lord, my lord! this cool, inſulting phraſe
But ill befits our cauſe of argument.——
Still I command myſelf, and urge again,
That 'tis my wife I claim:
By every ſacred rite, and in the face
Of heaven, ſhe is mine and only mine.——

ANTONIO.

Dar'ſt thou call this a marriage? Who gave her
To thee?——
But go! I will not waſte more words upon thee:
I will not tell thee at what rate I hold thee.

GUSMAN.

Thus far my patience has prevail'd. Now,
For the laſt time, wilt thou reſtore her?

[ANTONIO *eyes him with a contemptuous glance, and walks to the upper end of the ſtage.*]

Why wilt thou force my hand to what my ſoul
Abhors?—Draw, and defend thyſelf!

ANTONIO.

Put up thy ſword! Truce with thy flouriſhes!

GUSMAN.

This is beyond endurance. Draw!
Draw, ſir, and inſtantly!

ANTONIO.

ANTONIO.

Or thou wilt ſtab me?——

GUSMAN.

What doſt thou mean, Antonio?—This is not
A common quarrel: this is not a brawl
Of ſwaggerers o'er their cups. It is
A mortal ſtrife! Thou haſt committed towards me
The greateſt of all human injuries:
Wilt thou afford no ſatisfaction? Haſt
Thou dar'd the moſt enormous of offences,
And want'ſt the courage to defend it? Art
Thou not a ſoldier? I ſtand aſtoniſh'd at
Thy conduct!

ANTONIO.

Thou ill-adviſed man!
Is not the injury thou haſt done enough
Already? For now, even now, I'll tell
Thee what thou art!——
My ſiſter was alone in her paternal manſion;
My father's ſacred aſhes not yet cold
Among his kindred, mighty dead; ſhe was
Alone; her guard the ſacredneſs of oaths,
The ſanctity of bleſt religion;
Our houſe's honour, and her father's will.
I fear'd not thus to leave her: I believ'd I ſaw
A principle in every Spaniſh boſom,
More powerful than a thouſand knights in arms.——
But thou, thou trampledſt on all human juſtice,
Seiz'd thy occaſion,
Seduc'd her inexperienc'd youth, and ſtole her!——
Come on! Complete thy infamy!
Thou think'ſt, becauſe my ſiſter is thus ſunk,

Thus

Thus loſt to Spain and to Almanza's honour,
That ſhe would kiſs the ſword that drank my blood,
That her degenerate paſſion would embrace
With double eagerneſs her paramour,
Trick'd out with ſymbols of her brother's murder!

[GUSMAN's *ſword drops from his hand.*]

GUSMAN.

Antonio,
I had heard that thou wert great—take the confeſſion
Thou wring'ſt from him on whom thou heap'ſt affronts,
Bitter and deadly.—Me thou delight'ſt
To injure—Yet am I not deſtitute
Of hope and comfort.
In thy own heart I have a pledge of ſafety.
Thou wilt not murder Helena,
And, from a lover's and a monarch's ſearch,
It cannot be that thou ſhouldſt long conceal her.

ANTONIO.

Know, Helen is as ſafe from thy invaſion
As if ſhe mingled with her kindred duſt.
The ſacred inſtitutions of the cloiſter
Were not devis'd, but with full recollection
There were ſuch men as thou. They are provided
With caverns unexplor'd and countleſs dungeons:
The firſt and holieſt of their laws is ſilence:
No ſtranger ever is allow'd to hear
The names or number of their habitants,
Their cells, their galleries, diſciplines and priſons.——
I leave thee then this food for rumination.
Go, ſir, purſue thy ſearch, find out my ſiſter,

Bear her away in triumph!——
Succeſs attend thy gallant enterpriſe!

[*Exit.*

GUSMAN.

Inhuman ſubtlety! Why, what a curſt
Alliance he has form'd?
Oh, Helen, have I ſeen thee for the laſt, laſt time!
It ſhall not be.——Oh, what a thing is man!
More fell than tigers o'er their gaſping prey,
With cool, deliberate mind he ſearches out
The vein, where ſovereign ſenſe reſides, the point,
Where we are moſt alive to nameleſs anguiſh,
And ſkips, and laughs, and revels in our torture.——
But, no, it cannot be. There is no man,
That holds this empire o'er me.——
I'll raſe each monaſtery throughout the realm,
I'll ſcatter flames and death on every ſide,
Churches ſhall blaze, and ruin mark my progreſs.——
What ſhall I do? Oh, whither, whither turn me?
Loſt, peerleſs, lovely, angel Helena!

[*Exit.*

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT

ACT V.

SCENE, *the Court.*

PEDRO *and* DIEGO.

DIEGO.

'TIS ſtrange that an unſeaſon'd, beardleſs boy
Poſſeſs'd this dangerous ſecret.

PEDRO.

Antonio ever lov'd,
And therefore deeply truſted him. He gave him
The conduct of his ſiſter to the cloiſter:
Where they were ſcarce arriv'd, before,
Unſeen and unſuſpected by the reſt,
Henry withdrew, and haſten'd hither.

DIEGO.

I wonder much he felt the deſperate courage,
Thus to revolt from one he ever bow'd to,
No leſs than to a parent.

PEDRO.

When firſt he met his gallant, warlike brother,
Each word Antonio utter'd was to Henry
An oracle from heaven,
Each intervenient image faded from him,
And his Antonio ſeem'd the univerſe.
But, when he came to view his ſiſter's ſufferings,

And saw her, spirit-broken with affliction,
Then all his tenderness of heart return'd;
Then nature triumph'd, and the high-strain'd lesson
He late admir'd, became an empty sound.

DIEGO.

The daring mischief acted by Antonio,
Almost exceeds belief. Immersed in warlike scenes,
He has forgotten sure the elements
Of civil order.
My liege, he was thy earliest infant friend:
The court, the people
Will view thy conduct with a curious eye;
How wilt thou meet this bold offender?

PEDRO.

With fix'd and stern resentment.
He has grievously abus'd my confidence,
He saw
My unresisting kindliness of spirit,
He felt how alien to my temper was
The accent of authority, and thence
Concluded that, whate'er he did, I should
Want firmness to resent. But he shall find
His error.

DIEGO.

Yet, if the duke retrieve his ravish'd bride,
Antonio's disappointment then, the failure
Of schemes thus desperately pursued, will sure
Be punishment enough.

PEDRO.

No, Diego, no.
So unheard an outrage

Muſt not, and cannot, be paſs'd o'er in ſilence.
The truſt I bear,
The ſanctity of laws, the general ſafety,
Committed to my hands, demand atonement.——
But ſee, a meſſenger is haſtening towards us.
It is from Guſman.

Enter LOPEZ.

PEDRO.

Quickly ſpeak! Where is thy lord?

LOPEZ.

My liege,
A ſhort hour ſince, I left him at the convent
To which Antonio had convey'd the ducheſs.

PEDRO.

And has he found her? Has he borne her off?

LOPEZ.

The lady-abbeſs firſt denied
With vehemence all knowledge of her gueſt.
At length, ſeeing Don Henry with the duke,
She yielded ſomewhat to the dread ſhe felt
Of your authority, and, having call'd
Antonio's factor, Manuel, to her aid,
Reſign'd to him the encounter with Don Guſman.

PEDRO.

Diego, 'tis well. From his intelligence
My mind forecaſts a bloodleſs victory.

LOPEZ.

One thing, my liege, remains to tell.
Even as I haſten'd hither, I o'ertook

One,

One, whom I know a ſervant of the convent,
Urging with utmoſt ſpeed the ſelf-ſame road;
His object doubtleſs to alarm Antonio.
Unleſs then their celerity prevent
The danger, he may yet meet and o'erpower them.
[*Exit.*

PEDRO.

Almighty heaven!——Diego;
What think'ſt thou now? Does my reſentment now
Appear too great? What ſcenes of blood

[*Enter a Meſſenger, who ſpeaks to* Diego, *and exit.*]

Such raſhneſs may occaſion! Somewhat muſt
Be done; and ſuddenly.

DIEGO.

My liege,
Antonio is already in the field:
Ere we can reach the ſpot, all muſt be ended.

Enter Henry.

HENRY.

Joy, joy, my ſovereign! Guſman and my ſiſter
Are at the palace-gates.

PEDRO.

Heavens! can it be?
Say, how did they eſcape?

HENRY.

Even thus, my liege.
Guſman directed ſome among his followers,
With whom I join'd myſelf, to explore the way.
We did ſo, climb'd the hill of Dara,

And thence deſcried a troop of warlike horſe,
And in the midſt Antonio's waving creſt.——
Antonio has not met them.—Forgive, my liege,
Forgive my joy! and let my penitence
Obtain the pardon of my former error!
They come; they come.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE *changes to another Apartment in the Palace.*

GUSMAN *and* HELENA.

(HELENA *habited as a nun.*)

GUSMAN.

What doſt thou mean, my love! Thou art not, ſure,
Diſpleas'd that thus I haſten'd to thy reſcue?

HELENA.

I have much to ſay.
Liſten then, Guſman, with attentive ear;
Allow my o'ercharg'd heart to ſpeak its purpoſe!

GUSMAN.

Thou ſtrange,
Inexplicable, yet ever-lovely creature,
Go on! I am fix'd to hear thee.

HELENA.

Canſt thou accuſe me, Guſman, that in aught
I have prov'd me tardy or indifferent
To the office of an ever-faithful wife?
Have I not lov'd thee with unchanging fondneſs?
When thou haſt dreſs'd thy face in ſmiles and ſoftneſs,
Have I e'er met thee coldly? Or,
When grief and thoughts unpleaſing gloom'd thy brow,

Have

Have I not ſooth'd thy cares, and watch'd the ſeaſon
To wake thee into peace? Speak, and accuſe me freely!

GUSMAN.

Why, Helena, theſe queſtions? Whither tends
This ſad ſolemnity?

HELENA.

If thou e'er lov'dſt me, Guſman, anſwer!

GUSMAN.

Be pacified, my ſweet one! Thou haſt ever been
Kind, true and tender, paſt the power of thought.

HELENA.

I thank thee. Yes, when I look back upon
This ſhort, this happy interim of exiſtence,
I would not think it had a ſingle blot.
In the dark ſolitude that now awaits me,
The cheerleſs cell that opens to receive me,——

GUSMAN.

What wouldſt thou ſay?

HELENA.

Doſt thou not hear me? Spare my weakneſs
Unneceſſary anguiſh! With ill-omen'd haſte,
Thou haſt torn me from the cloiſter. Thither I
Muſt yet return.

GUSMAN.

Return to that accurſed cloiſter!—
Why, Helen! Helen! this is ſimple madneſs!—
Art thou the convert of Antonio's fury?

HELENA.

I am for ever thine,
Thine by all ſacred ties, thine from my inmoſt ſoul.

Yet,

Yet, for a little period, we muſt part:
Our parting, truſt me, will draw down a bleſſing
On all our future lives.

GUSMAN.

A little period!——
Thou art Antonio's dupe: I ſee it all;
I will not, for a moment, bear thy abſence.

HELENA.

Guſman,
My conduct is reſolv'd. Not royal might,
Not all the eloquence of love can turn me.—
This then remains.
While thus I yield me to the voice of duty,
While I reſolve to take away the cauſe
Of ſtrife and blood,
Thou may purſue Antonio's life, and blaſt
Me with his murder.—Wilt thou, Guſman?

GUSMAN.

Helen!
The project thou haſt form'd, gracious perhaps
In thee, in me were infamy!

HELENA.

Concede, my Guſman! Truſt me, thy conceſſion
Will wake the human nature in his breaſt.

GUSMAN.

No, ſuch conceſſion would ſo much the more
Intoxicate his proud, imperious temper.

HELENA.

Be it the price is high: it purchaſes
All that can give me peace, can bleſs my life.—
I am beſet and haunted with contrition:
Affianc'd to Almanza's choſen friend,

I ſhould have ſtarted at another's love.—
I gave thee all, reſign'd for thee
My houſe's union, my unſullied conſcience.

GUSMAN.

Dream not of horrors, beſt, divineſt creature!
Intruſt to me,
And to the king, the iſſue of the conteſt.
All ſhall be well.
Have mind upon the ſoftneſs of thy ſex.
Withdraw thyſelf.

Enter PEDRO.

PEDRO.

Guſman, I come to aſk thy preſence.
Intelligence this moment has been brought,
Antonio bends his courſe
This way, with purpoſe, as it ſeems, to enter
My very palace.
Be thou the witneſs of Antonio's audience.——
Lady, withdraw.

HELENA.

Pardon me, gracious ſir, I cannot go.
Haunted with viſions of impending death,
I cannot quit the ſcene. Oh, mighty ſovereign,
If ever pity enter'd in thy breaſt,
If woman's tears e'er ſway'd thy manly heart,
Permit me on the inſtant
Again to ſeek the cloiſter.
Canſt thou believe the interval miſſpent,
That gives thee back again thy earlieſt friend,
That reconciles to life and honour

The

The conqueror of Sforza, all-ador'd
Antonio?

GUSMAN.

Yield to the king. Dear Helen, leave us!

Enter HENRY.

HELENA.

Henry, what new commotion ſhakes thy frame?

PEDRO.

Has Antonio perpetrated
Some further violence?

HENRY.

Antonio perpetrated?
No! ſave me from remorſe! from his deſpair!——
I cannot bear my brother's ſad rebuke;
I cannot bear to view his piteous ruin,
And I the accurſed cauſe!

HELENA.

What ruin? Speak
At once! What has befallen Antonio?

HENRY.

He haſtens hither to reclaim thee.—
I met him near the palace-gates.
Juſt as I caught his view, I ſhrunk aghaſt:
But even my motion drew his reſtleſs eye,
And he perceiv'd me.
Henry, he ſaid, Come and behold
Thy brother's cloſing ſcene! Come, fatal cauſe,
Unhappy inſtrument of his deſtruction!

Enter LOPEZ.

Antonio, ſire, aſks to be heard.

[*Here the ſcene opens, and diſcovers guards in conſiderable numbers, and on every ſide of the ſtage.*]

HELENA.

What wouldſt thou do, my liege?
Has not the tale of Henry ſhaken thee?——
I ſee the coming moment.
I ſee theſe walls diſtain'd with reeking blood.——
The ſcene is yet inviolate! 'Tis thine,
Thy ſole prerogative to bleſs us.—Wilt
Thou not? Wilt thou not hear?——My huſband!

PEDRO.

Admit Antonio.

SCENE *the Laſt*,

Enter ANTONIO.

[*He looks round upon the perſons preſent, and the guards.*]

ANTONIO.

Oh, Pedro, ſovereign of my native realm,
I did not think thus ſoon again to have ſtood
Within thy preſence.

PEDRO.

I believe it, ſir.

ANTONIO.

I did not think thus to have appear'd thy ſupplicant.

PEDRO.

PEDRO.

And what is thy petition?
Who firſt has ſought to gain his purpoſes
By hoſtile force, can ſcarcely think himſelf
A hopeful ſuitor.

ANTONIO.

Oh, ſir,
Mock not the anguiſh of a wounded ſpirit,
I have been made a mark for treachery,
For baſe hypocriſy and falſhood.——
I now am in thy power—What needed there
Theſe guards, the exhibition of thy royalty?
Think'ſt thou, in entering thus alone, I knew
Not what I did?——
I will be found the proſperous advocate
Of juſtice, virtue, truth and honour,
Or I will fall their victim.

PEDRO.

Speak on, Antonio: give thy grievance vent.

ANTONIO.

Thou hear'ſt me now, my liege, in my laſt hour
Of audience.—Thou cenſur'ſt me, for that I had reſort
To force, I bow not to the cenſure: I did what
My ſpirit prompted, and my faith approv'd.——
That trial is clos'd.—And now I ſtand before thee,
In the ſolemnity of final challenge,
To claim thy juſtice!—Pedro, it is not well
Thou ſhouldſt rebuke my violence.—What was it
Drove me to violence?—'Twas thy miſdeed,

Thy

Thy low evaſion, thy ſlight, fickle nature!——
I charge thee now, even by Rodrigo,
Whoſe image, from his diſmal priſon-houſe,
Meagre with injury,
And ſeam'd with deadly ſcars, I bid thee look on:
I charge thee by Almanza,
Whoſe venerable viſage, when things tranſient
Have all diſſolv'd, thou muſt once more confront:
Reſtore thy charge!—not
Inviolate!—yet, as ſhe is, reſtore her!——
Give back my ſiſter to the cloiſter, whence,
By baſeſt fraud, and ſacrilegious outrage,
She was this moment ſtolen!—Speak, Pedro, ſpeak!

PEDRO.

Yes, I will anſwer.
And doſt thou now, now, claim ſpontaneous favour?
When next I ſaw thee, decency ſhould have taught thee
To atone thy guilt, and ſupplicate forgiveneſs.

ANTONIO.

Pedro, my ſoul is on the rack.—Trifle not now,
I fervently intreat thee, with emotions,
That tear my heart, unfix this ſolid frame,
Shake all this maſtery of man, and teem
With death!—'Tis dangerous—I would not be
Impell'd to deſperation.

PEDRO.

Then at once
My anſwer is, Guſman is Helen's huſband.
Talk'ſt thou of theft and violation?
Who was the firſt to lay unhallow'd hands

On

On that which was another's?——
'Tis but a few hours ſince, I met thee here
With all a brother's kindneſs,
With the ſtrong claſpings of an ardent friendſhip:
Thou urgedſt me with paſſionate addreſs,
In the plain phraſe of one ſtung to the ſoul:
Did I reprove thy ſharpneſs? Nay, was not
The temper I diſplay'd, docile, and yielding
Beneath thy preſſure? And now I find
My mild and eaſy tenderneſs requited
By outrage, deadly to all private kindneſs,
Subverſive of command and civil order,
And which no rank, no worth can counterpoiſe.——

ANTONIO.

Pedro, this is too much. It is ignoble, and
Unworthy thee.——I
Can hold no longer—Yet relent! relent!
Before it is too late.

HELENA.

I have been dumb
Thus long—Now I muſt ſpeak—
Here rather, mighty ſovereign, ſheathe thy ſword,
Than drive my brother to deſpair!—Stop, ſir!
(*ſeeing the King about to ſpeak.*)
Remember what importance may belong
Now to a ſingle word!—Forgive me, Guſman!
I love thee in this moment more than e'er
I did—But yet I muſt have way!—Antonio,
(*paſſing over to her brother.*)
Take me; lead me back to yon cloiſter!—Shut
Me there from every human eye! Henceforth

For ever let none hear of Helena!——
Never was victim offer'd up more freely;
Never was price paid down for more tranſcendant good!

ANTONIO.

I thank thee, Helen! *(embrace)* This free act of thine
May yet reſtore thy brother, raiſe him to
New life and happier proſpects.——Now, proud king,
Where is the miſcreant now, that will diſpute
My claims?——

GUSMAN.

Helen! perfidious, timorous Helen!

PEDRO.

Guards, ſtand upon your duty!——
Antonio,
I have endur'd thy inſolence too long——
Know then, proud warrior!
My doom is final. To the marriage
Thou wouldſt diſſolve, I give my laſting ſanction.
Hence from my ſtate I baniſh thee for ever!
If by to-morrow's ſun thou'rt found within
The capital, thou dieſt!——

ANTONIO.

Guards, give us way!

[*He draws his ſword; endeavouring to paſs, is overpowered, and ſeparated from his ſiſter; he then frees himſelf from his aſſailants, and again gaining poſſeſſion of* HELENA, *turns to* PEDRO.]

King, yield thy truſt! thy ſworn, thy ſacred truſt!

PEDRO.

Tear them apart! Strike down the traitor's ſword!

[ANTONIO *plunges his ſword in the boſom of* HELENA; *ſhe falls.*]

ANTONIO.

ANTONIO.

This is my laſt expedient to vindicate
The glory of my race, and thy juſt cauſe,
My ever honour'd friend.——Still in thy veins,
Erring, yet ever-lovely Helena!
There runs ſome portion of the unſullied blood,
From which thou drew'ſt thy birth: let
That expiate thy fault!——

HELENA.

Oh, welcome wound! Oh, pleaſing, lovely death!
This cloſes all; diſſolves all difficulties;
Atones my wrong, and gives me back the love
Of all my ſoul adores——
Now, now, Antonio——Yes,—thou wilt forgive me!

ANTONIO.

Helen, I do—Yes, thus expiring as
Thou art, thus faulty as thou ſhow'dſt thyſelf,
Thou art my worſhip and my pride. Angels
Shall take thee to their charge; Almanza, ſmile
And bleſs thee.—Deareſt, beſt-lov'd ſiſter!

HELENA.

'Tis paſt: that pang decides: farewel for ever!

[dies.

ANTONIO.

Revive, my Helen: live a little longer!
I cannot loſe thee yet!
Bleſs me again with that angelic voice!——
This is indeed the pageantry of juſtice;
It is too much!——
She hears me not: ſhe never will hear more!

THE END.

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